

## Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Eliza Symonds Bell, July 19, 1878, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Mrs. Alexander Melville Bell. Abercorn Arms Hotel, Great Stanmore, July 19, 1878. My dear Mrs. Bell:

Today Alec says is the anniversary of your wedding day and I must send you our congratulations and best wishes for many happy returns. I only hope it has not been so hot with you as with us. We had no idea it could be so warm in this country and especially here about two hundred feet above the sea. However it is quite cool tonight and we hope the worst is over for the present.

Alec had a letter from you and from Mr. Bell a few days ago. We were so glad to hear from you.

Thank you for your kind inquiries about my Sister Gertrude. Doctor Johnson came here yesterday, and was much pleased with the improvement she has made since leaving town, he says it has been rapid, and that she has gained three inches in her left lung. You know when she was first ill she only used her right lung but now she can breathe through the upper part of the other. She is also very much stronger, in London she could not ride half an hour in a cab without feeling it for two days, now she goes out driving every day for two and even three hours, and in that most uncomfortable of vehicles, the wagonette, and hardly seems more tired after it than the rest of it. The Doctor says she can go where she pleases now, and we are longing to take flight, for though the country is exquisite, the hotel isn't. It is more a drinking tavern and stopping places for stage coach excursionists than a hotel, and we are annoyed every night by the shouts, tobacco and beer air from the bar, everything too is dirty the plates half washed and but for the lovely air and the benefit it has been to us all we should not have staid so long.

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What do you think of Elsie's weighing fourteen pounds on the day she was ten weeks old, the doctor thought both mother and child had grown fat, he had not thought I could have nursed her more than a month. She grows every day "in beauty and intelligence" and is amused by watching all that goes around her and likes nothing better than her drives with us. She is a perfect little Bell, more like Mrs. Home about the forehead I think. Mamma says she is like your miniature of Alec.

On our Wedding day Alec carried Bessie, Baby and I into town, and we had a splendid time, I mean Alec and I, visiting Cleopatra's needle, which lay horizontally six feet, above the embankment, she is to be raised horizontally to half it's height and then turned and allowed to drop into position. It was quite as immense as I expected, I thought it was six feet long each side but Alec thinks much more, at any rate it is wonderful to think that men could bring it safely so far, and actually expect to raise the huge thing upright on it's pedestal. Afterwards we went to two book stores and Alec bought the Adeline edition of the British poets in 52 volumes for me, and I gave him a new edition of Chambers encyclopaedia, I wanted to get the Britanica, but only seven volumes were out and cost thirty shillings each, and I thought that beyond my purse.

In the evening we went to see Maskelyn and Cooke cut off each others heads and float about the darkened hall etc. Next day we came home. Since then poor Alec has been obliged to be in town almost every day about the Telephone Co's business. The postmaster General introduced in Parliament a bill called "Act to make further provision respecting Post Office Telegraphe" in which it was proposed that the term "Telegraph" shall in addition to the meaning assigned to it by the act of 1869, "include any apparatus for transmitting messages or other communications with the aid of electricity magnetism or any other like agency." Of course the company think it aimed directly at them and Alec and Mr. Scott have had hard work calling on Members of Parliament and getting them to oppose the bill and present petitions against it. Finally yesterday a deputation waited on the Postmaster and he consented to modify the bill and postponed the second

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reading which was to have been yesterday. Wednesday a meeting of the Tel. Co. board of Directors was called and Mr. Scott and 3 Mr. Wollastun resigned their positions. Their resignations were not accepted, the directors agreeing that McClure would not do at all as permanent manager, and thinking Alec believes that Mr. Scott may be the proper person for the place.

The Queen's Telephones are done at last and are very pretty but Alas! they won't work! Alec cannot find out the cause after many experiments today but this evening thinks there may be some fault in the coils.

I have told you about all I can think of now for it is nearly eleven and I am sleepy and tired and all except Alec who is deep in Goldsby Legends, are in bed.

With love to Mr. Bell, Mary Louise and Lizzie.

Affectionately, Mabel. Alec wrote to Sir Charles Dilke asking him to oppose the bill, He wrote back, "Dear Sir: Certainly, Yours truly, C. Dilke."

Abercorn Arms Hotel, Great Stanmore, July 19th., 1878. Dear Grandpapa and Grandmamma:

If I could speak I would wish you many happy returns of your Wedding-day and tell you how much I want you to take me up in your arms and kiss your first little grand-daughter. But I can't speak yet for I have not learned visible speech, but I can wish you many happy returns all the same. Papa is writing at the dictation of my thought and I will sign my name.

Your loving granddaughter, Elsie May, Her mark Witness to the signature and co-partner in the wishes Alexander Graham Bell.